proved the most slippery and difficult. But we did not stop until the job was done. It was such an improvement."

John just shook his head in amazement.

Our first session was scheduled for the day after we moved in, and it went beautifully—so beautifully, that it took only four hours to lay down the basic instrumental and vocal tracks of "Subterranean Homesick Blues." When the tracks were finished, the musicians did not want to go home, so they hung out, jamming with each other or practicing their own licks. At midnight, however, Ringo and Keith left. It was time for them to hit the town.

The jam continued for another half hour, then visitors arrived. The visitors were Paul and Linda McCartney. I thought it uncanny that they had chosen to turn up on the very first night of recording. Later Paul and Linda would insist that it had been a coincidence, but that was hard to believe, because everyone on the rock 'n' roll grapevine knew we were going to start recording that night.

Paul headed straight for John. "Hello, John," he said eagerly.

John, however, was a study in casualness. "How are you, Paul?" he replied softly.

"Fine. How about you?"

"Okay."

"Hi, duckie," Linda said to John, kissing him on the cheek.

"Hello, Linda."

John and Paul made small talk as if they had been speaking on the phone two or three times a day and had spoken just a few hours earlier. It was one of the most casual conversations I had ever heard. They couldn't be the two men who not only had been trading vicious attacks with each other in public but also had squadrons of lawyers poised in battle against each other while they carved up their multimillion-dollar empire. They looked like any pair of old friends having a pleasant low-key reunion.

"How nice to meet you," Linda said when we were introduced. "I've read all about you in the English newspapers." I was surprised by Linda's English accent. I had never heard one quite so "British."

The small talk continued; then Paul, like a man possessed, suddenly bounced up and headed straight for Ringo's drum kit and began to bash the drums. "Let's play!" he exclaimed.

Linda immediately headed for the organ. "Let's play," she echoed. They couldn't be stopped.

John strapped on his guitar and began to play "Midnight Special," one of the numbers the Beatles used to jam on when they first began to play together. So did Jesse Ed Davis and Danny "Kootch" Kortchmar, while Harry sang along.

Then we had another visitor, Stevie Wonder, who was also recording at the Record Plant. "Stevie, Paul is here, and we're goin' to jam," John called out.

"Okay," said Stevie. He went to the electric piano.

"Let's record it," said John.

"Yeah," Paul agreed.

John suddenly became very enthusiastic. There was no bass player in our studio; he and I set out to find one. "We need a bass player," he told the startled producer in the control booth of the studio next to ours. "Paul and I are jammin' together."

"I play bass!" the producer exclaimed. He dashed from his session to join ours.

"Fung Yee, I want you to play," John told me when we returned to our studio. "Grab a tambourine."

I got up and joined the musicians.

"Let it rip," said John.

That was the first time John and Paul had played together since *Abbey Road* in 1969, and it sounded wonderful. The team of Lennon and McCartney had been reunited with amazing ease. After they'd run down the song, John turned to Paul. "Could you please tell your organist to turn down the volume? I can't hear Mr. Wonder," he told him.

John and Paul played it again, and it sounded even better. They made joyous music together that night. Like the Lennon-Jagger "Too Many Cooks," the tape of "Midnight Special"—

the one and only time John and Paul, backed by Stevie Wonder and Harry Nilsson, played together after the breakup of the Beatles—still exists.

When they were through playing, John and Paul once again picked up their casual conversation. It was as if they had not played at all. Then John said, "Why don't you come visit us?"

"Where do you live?" asked Paul, and I gave Linda the directions.

I was buzzing with excitement during the ride home. "I can't believe how easily it went. It's as if you had never stopped playing together. Did you like playing with him again?"

"It was interestin'," John replied.

"Were you surprised when they came through the door?"

He remained silent. The neutral expression on his face could have meant a million things. One thing I knew it meant was that he didn't want to hear another question about it.

We did not see Ringo at all the next day until he arrived at the session that night. He walked in and went straight to his drums. He fiddled with them, then stopped, then fiddled with them some more. "Somebody did something to my snare drum," he said irritably.

"Paul was here last night. He played 'em," explained John.

"He's always fuckin' around with me things!" It sounded as though Ringo were back in Liverpool and that all of them were still teenagers and that nothing in their lives had changed since the day they had played together for the very first time. I realized then that no matter what might happen among them, this was the way they would always relate to each other.

A few days after that, Paul and Linda arrived at the house to spend the afternoon with us. They brought their three girls with them: Mary, who was five at that time; Stella, who must have been around three; and Heather, twelve, Linda's daughter by her first marriage.

The children were adorable, and I asked Armando to

make sure they had drinks and had something to eat if they got hungry.

We showed Paul and Linda the house and then sat down in the living room to talk. While we talked Paul kept staring at the piano. He couldn't stand it anymore and got up and headed for it. The minute John saw Paul go to the piano he ducked out of the room, and Linda followed after him. Ringo also made a quick exit.

John told me later that Linda had questioned him about me. She wanted to know who I was, where I came from, and what we were planning to do with our futures. She also wanted to feel John out about business. Her questioning had made John very uncomfortable.

I remained in the living room while Paul began to sing and play a group of 1930's standards. While he was playing, his five-year-old, Mary, said, "Daddy, are you some sort of pop star or something?" Everyone burst out laughing.

The concert continued, and Harry and Keith began to sing along with Paul.

When Linda returned, I noticed she was wearing platform shoes. Our house, like so many houses in Southern California, was shag carpeted, and I noticed that she kept tripping on the rug. "Linda, why don't you take your shoes off? Make yourself comfortable," I told her.

"I'm fine. After all, these shoes are British-made," she replied in her ultraprecise English accent.

Later we all went for a walk on the beach and then sat by the pool, taking in the sun, while the girls went for a dip. The conversation remained casual, since John and Paul did not discuss any controversial issues; there was not much gossip, and the afternoon went by pleasantly. After a late lunch, Linda launched into a long paean to the joys of living in England. When she was finished, she turned to John and said, "Don't you miss England?"

"Frankly," John replied, "I miss Paris."

The girls had begun to yawn, and it was getting late. Paul and Linda gathered their belongings. "Let's see each other again," Paul said right before they left.

"Let's," John replied.

"Good-bye, duckie," Linda said to John.

We walked them to their car, waved good-bye as they pulled away, and then went back into the house. "I had a good time," I told John.

"It was interestin'."

"Do you think anything is on Paul's mind?"

John didn't answer.

"That's some English accent Linda has."

John smiled. "Not bad for a JAP," he said wryly. Then he turned and went upstairs.

The next week continued to center on recording, and led to a fantastic jam one night among Ringo, Keith, and Jim Keltner, all drumming together on "Rock Around the Clock."

Everything was going so well—until Harry's voice kicked up. Harry desperately wanted to sing his best, and going for it, he had, we now realized, strained his vocal chords after doing innumerable takes. The worse the strain, the more compulsive he became, endlessly insisting on repeating his vocals even though each performance sounded scratchier than the one before it. It was as if he believed that somehow, if he just kept singing, the much-admired Nilsson sound would once again somehow magically emerge. After he did the vocal on a song of his called "Old Forgotten Soldier," John turned to me and said, "I don't want to use it. It hurts me to listen to it."

Meanwhile Harry insisted on repeating the song; John did not have the heart to stop him. It was a dark, desperate song about loneliness, aging, and failure. The combination of Harry's agonized sounds and the depressing lyrics was unbearable. Harry sang it again and again and again. We were all horrified. "Come on," said John. He was so upset, he made me take him home.

"Harry's voice is still all fucked up with strain and coughin'," John said to me that night. "We'll have to do all the vocals again."

During that month Yoko continued to call frequently. Her conversations with John were friendly, and nothing she said upset him. Nonetheless, as the month began to draw to a close, John's behavior began to change. Each day he grew a little quieter, going to bed one night at ten o'clock and sleeping until late the next morning.

"John, are you all right?" I asked.

"Yes. Yes."

The next day he was up even before I was, and I found him outside, reading. "Would you like some breakfast?" I asked.

He did not respond. Finally he got up and walked inside. As soon as he was through eating he went back outside, sat by himself, and continued to read. In the afternoon, when everyone went to the pool, he got up and walked inside again.

Later I went into the bedroom. "Is anything wrong?" I asked.

"I have to be by meself." He turned away.

That pattern continued for another few days. Even though John seemed to be pulling away from me, the physical passion between us did not diminish at all. John was very mercurial, and it was obvious that he had suddenly begun to separate himself from his friends and to separate himself from me in mind but not in body. I did not know what was really going on, and as the days of silence continued, I grew more frustrated and nervous.

Suddenly John stopped drinking and refused all offers of drugs. All he wanted to do was read and be by himself.

"Have I done anything?" I asked.

"I have to be by meself!"

His grim expression said it all.

That night, however, when we returned to the studio, he finally opened up.

"Harry told me he's been coughin' up blood. Must have been that fuckin' flu, and then singin' so hard on top of it. I should have stopped him instead of lettin' him go on. I should've given him a rest."

John looked at me. He was really scared. "I don't want to be fucked up," he said. "It scares the hell out of me."

We talked quietly for an hour that night before going to bed. I thought that I understood why John had been brood-

ing and was pleased that he was finally willing to talk about what was on his mind. We made gentle love and then went to sleep.

In the morning, however, John was silent again. He remained silent for the next few days. Once again I grew nervous and uneasy. Everyone else in the house seemed unaware of the change in John, and I had no one to talk to, which only added to my feelings of uncertainty.

I was sitting at the pool by myself when Klaus and Cynthia joined me. "We hear John's going to New York," Klaus said casually during the conversation.

I got up and found John. "Are we leaving for New York?" I asked.

"I'm leavin'. You're not."

"What do you mean?"

"I'm goin' to take Harry to New York. If I can get him and me out of Los Angeles, I'll have a better chance of gettin' him to do the vocals."

"John, I don't want to stay here by myself."

"I need time alone. You can't come with me," he replied sharply.

"How long are you going to be away?"

"I don't know. I'll call you."

We stared at each other but neither of us said another word, and that was the end of our conversation. I went back to the pool and sat down, doing my best not to cry. John could have suggested that I go home to my apartment instead of leaving me in Los Angeles by myself. He could have asked if I had enough money to keep going on my own. Once again my welfare seemed to mean absolutely nothing to him. I was very hurt, but I was so much in love that I did not even allow myself to express the anger I really felt. I just decided to put up a brave front and keep to myself.

On Sunday night John left for New York; Harry was to follow a few days later. Our parting was a cold one. John kissed me briefly, then he got into the limousine. At the beginning of the month I had been afraid that John would run riot in the house. How ironic! He had sobered up totally and had sud-

denly decided to move on without me. After John left, I thought about how I felt. There was no denying it: I was hurt and angry and very confused, and no matter how hard I thought, I could not figure out why John had decided to abandon me.

ton!" he exclaimed. A little later he had a brainstorm. "It'll be a good idea when Julian comes over for him to go with them. They can look after him on the boat."

I called Tony back, and he loved the idea of escorting Julian to the United States. Then I called Cynthia and told her of John's plan.

"It's a wonderful idea," she told me. She asked to speak to John, and I gave the phone to him.

When John spoke to Cynthia, he was extremely curt. "Okay . . . fine . . . good," he said, wanting to get off the phone as quickly as possible.

The next time John spoke to Julian, Julian told him that Cynthia was planning to go with him. John was furious. He was counting on Julian to travel alone. It took all of my powers of persuasion to convince him to allow Cynthia to accompany her son.

After a few phone calls, it was arranged that when Cynthia and Julian arrived in New York, Julian would stay with us, and Cynthia would stay with friends.

John did not want to stay in our new apartment until the phones were installed, and so we moved back to the Pierre for a day or two.

I had to laugh. In so many ways our lives resembled a soap opera, and it seemed as if we were always packing our bags and moving somewhere.

While we lived at the Pierre we continued to go to the studio, where John worked on vocal overdubs. One night John's dream song, "#9 Dream," was to be overdubbed, but the backup singers did not turn up. John specifically wanted two male and two female voices. He also wanted a female voice representing one of the two female spirits in the dream to call "John . . . John . . ." periodically during the track. He wanted me to play that part, but he did not want me to be one of the background vocalists.

"I can sing background," I told him.

"I don't want you to."

"I know it's not hard, and you know I can sing. Let me try it."

"No."

John rounded up a boy and Roy Cicala's wife, Lori Burton. He needed another female voice. He decided to sing the other male harmony line, and when he could not find a second female, he finally said in desperation, "Fung Yee, give it a try."

I had no problem doing the background voice. But when it came time for me to call "John . . . John . . ." I had to have the lights in the booth dimmed, because it embarrassed me to say those sexy, erotic-sounding *John*'s with him looking at me. Nonetheless John was delighted when I was finished.

"I told you to trust me," I said.

"You were right." He still seemed nervous.

"You don't have to worry about me, John," I told him. "I don't want a solo recording career. And I don't want a gig at Kenny's Castaways."

He laughed. "You always read my mind."

Three days after we moved into the Pierre and were getting ready to leave it, Cynthia, Julian, Elton, and Tony arrived. When John saw Cynthia, he said quietly, "Hi, Cyn." When he saw Julian, he gave him a big hug. Then he embraced Elton and Tony.

They had all had a marvelous crossing. "Julian was a dream," Elton told John. "He waited for us outside our staterooms, escorted us to the dining room, always made sure we had good seats at all the events on board."

"Well, folks, we have a new apartment and we have a new album." He put his arm around my shoulder. "We've been a very busy little couple since last you saw us." He turned to Julian. "And you've got your own room."

"When are you moving?" asked Cynthia.

"Tomorrow."

She laughed. Cynthia knew what life with John was like. Things always happened at a moment's notice.

We had been in our new apartment only an hour when our phone rang. Our first call was from Paul McCartney. In Los Angeles we had told Paul and Linda that they could always call the Dakota to get our number. When Paul discovered that we had just moved in he wanted to come over and say hello. The McCartneys had an uncanny knack for showing up whenever a new event occurred in our lives.

That evening they were at our door. Julian had not seen Paul in years, and Paul's appearance added to his surprise at suddenly finding himself living in an apartment with John. At ten Julian had a storehouse of memories of his childhood as the son of a Beatle, and he told Paul he could clearly remember Paul and his father playing together.

John and Paul chatted back and forth. Again the conversation was exceedingly casual. They liked each other, yet they seemed to feel fragile and uncertain and they dealt with the feelings by pretending nothing at all had ever been wrong. It was as if no one dared say anything substantial, in that way making sure that there would be no arguments to interrupt the rebuilding of the kind of friendship that would allow them to work together again.

Whenever there was a musical instrument in the room, Paul's eyes would automatically dart back and forth to it. As Paul spoke to John, his eyes, as usual, kept resting on John's piano. Paul couldn't stand it anymore. He got up, went to the piano, and began to play and sing. Linda burst into a huge smile. In a few minutes I could see John becoming annoyed, but he said nothing and maintained a neutral smile during Paul's concert.

Throughout the evening, every time I looked up, I found Linda staring at me. I felt as if she were trying to determine who I really was and how I had gotten there.

After two hours, Paul and Linda got up to go. "Let's see each other again," said Paul.

"Let's," John replied.

When they were gone, we poured a glass of wine, toasted each other, then went out to sit on the terrace and look at the stars. We were growing sleepy, so we went inside, got undressed, and went to bed. We had never been happier.

The next evening we had another visitor, Mick Jagger, who began to make a habit of calling and asking if he could drop over. We were always delighted to see him. Natty dressed and always looking roguish, he'd turn up with a wicked grin on his face. Mick usually brought something to drink and John and he would spend their evenings together, drinking wine and sitting back and relaxing. Mick loved takeout Chinese food. During those visits I'd call out and order our favorite dishes. Then, after we ate, John and Mick sometimes played their guitars and sang a bit, or we all watched television.

Mick's visits were low-key, yet I still sensed an air of mischief about him. At a moment's notice he was capable of surprise, and he and everyone else knew it. John and I affectionately nicknamed him "The Phantom." We never knew when he'd materialize, how long he would stay, when he'd call again, or what was really going on behind those devilish eyes and big pouting lips. Eventually he and I became friends, and I grew to like him a lot. He was his own man and he seemed to relish his success and his life. However, he always seemed a bit removed, like an actor who was enjoying his role but at the same time knew he was playacting and was always watching his own performance.

On our third night at the apartment Elton and Tony dropped in. Whenever Elton and John saw each other, they loved to have a good gossip about everyone they knew. For an hour they entertained us with their observations and witty one-liners.

When the laughter finally died down, John played Elton the tracks of *Walls and Bridges.* Elton was very impressed.

"I'd love you to do something on the album," said John.

"Anything you say," Elton replied.

"Which track would you like to play on?"

After a pause, Elton said, " 'Whatever Gets You Thru the Night.' "

"One of my least favorites!" John spat back.

"That song is a smash. It could be a number one," Tony told John.

John still looked skeptical.

"John, it gives me the most space to do something on," Elton explained.

A few nights later Elton and Tony went to the studio. If John was all business, Elton was equally quick. He listened to the song a second time, then sat down and expertly began to lay down the piano track. John stared at Elton's hands while Elton played.

see his show. John was delighted when he discovered that George's opening act, Ravi Shankar, was sick and could not go on. "Thank God," he said. "At least we don't have to go through that."

We watched from the wings, and some kids sitting in the first few rows spotted us and began to scream for John, so we stepped back. John didn't want to take the spotlight from George, and George had not asked him to go on.

At the end of the show John, who could see how ragged the show was, said, "I can help him." He felt that a surprise appearance by him would give the concert the punch it lacked.

On the way back to New York John again told George that he was willing to appear on stage with him.

"Thank you," said George quietly; no commitments were made.

By the time George was scheduled to play the Garden, Paul had arrived in New York. Julian was also scheduled to arrive on the day of that concert. During the day John was notified that the Apple negotiations were rapidly drawing to a close and that the final documents were about to be photocopied. John was told to be prepared to sign the final documents at midnight, after George's concert. At that time three of the four Beatles would gather together for the purpose of signing the papers that would officially dissolve their partnership. (Ringo had stayed in London to avoid being served with an Allen Klein subpoena and would sign the papers there.)

After John got the news, he said nothing. We were sitting in the bedroom, and I got up to go to the kitchen when John suddenly slammed the door and locked it behind me.

"John, what's the matter?" I called out.

"I'm not goin' to sign the agreement," he said through the closed door.

"What?"

"It's not fair. I've got to pay more taxes than the others. I'm being taxed twice as much."

I went to the door and tried to reason with him.

"Harold has told you again and again that this is the best deal you can have. He's told you that you've come out better than he ever thought you would. It's taken years to reach this point. I think you should sign."

John said nothing.

"Open the door."

There was more silence.

"What's going on?"

He refused to reply. I stood outside the door, wondering what to do. I knew that the settlement included a provision that John pay $1,000,000 in United States taxes, based on his income while he resided in the United States. Still, Harold Seider repeatedly had explained that there was no way around it. At that moment John was at his most unpredictable. Suddenly his fears that his money was going to be taken away from him, that he was going to be cheated, that he had to have as much money as possible, had all come into play. This was also John's way of resisting the reality that the Beatles were officially about to come to an end and that Paul was about to prevail.

I continued to try to coax him to unlock the door, but he would do nothing. It was one of those horrible moments when I knew that the only thing I could do was call Yoko, ask for help, and hope that *she* would behave in a rational manner.

I picked up the phone, called her, and told her, "John has decided he doesn't want to sign the agreement. He's very upset and he's locked me out of the bedroom. Yoko, you know it's taken a long time to reach this agreement. You know it's in both of your best interests to sign it. I don't often ask you for help, but I need your help this time. I want you to tell him to sign it."

"I knew it. I knew there would be trouble," she replied.

"That's not the point. The point is, we've got to avoid trouble."

"Don't tell him you spoke to me. I'll have to think of something. I'll call you back."

Half an hour later John unlocked the door. He was very shaky. He called Harold and told him of his decision not to sign the agreement. Harold told him not to worry, that he would take care of it. A little while later Julian arrived. Even though John was distracted, he had a warm reunion with his son. We took Julian out for a walk and something to eat before

we sent him off with Hilary Gerrard to the first of George's two concerts at the Garden. When we returned, a messenger had left a letter to John from Yoko. It was lying in front of the door. John picked it up and opened it.

His reaction was astonishment. "Yoko's astrologer told her to tell me I shouldn't sign the agreement. She's written a letter to warn me. Isn't that amazing?"

"It is amazing," I replied. Amazing for all the wrong reasons.

George called just before his concert. "Do you want to speak to John?" I asked.

"No." George had heard about John's decision and he was livid. "Just tell him I started this tour on my own and I'll end it on my own," he snarled. Then he slammed down the phone.

Later that night Paul called, too. Unlike George, he was exceptionally even-tempered. John explained to Paul his feelings about the unfairness of the tax provision, and they both agreed that they would try to find a solution.

The next day John abruptly decided he had to see Lee Eastman, choosing after three years of legal maneuvering suddenly to become his own lawyer. I was astonished by John's decision, and so were all of our lawyers, but there was nothing anyone could do about it. John had decided he had to see Eastman, period. A meeting was arranged for that evening.

When Paul and Linda called, I told Linda, "We're going to see your father tonight." Even she appeared to know nothing about the surprise meeting.

"Well, I'm always in favor of that!" she replied chirpily.

George was scheduled to give a second concert at the Garden that night, and just before we left, John dispatched Julian, with Hilary, to George's show and told him to tell George that he had gone to visit Lee Eastman in an attempt to solve the problem.

The Eastmans lived in a vast, elegant Park Avenue apartment, which housed an impressive collection of Picassos, Cézannes, and de Koonings. Eastman shook hands with John and led us into the study. He beckoned us to a couch, and we sat

facing him while Neil Aspinall, who had accompanied us, found a chair at the side of the room.

Eastman did not seem pleased by the visit from John. They spoke for an hour, and it was easy to sense Eastman's resentment. To him, John was a troublemaker: He was the one who had insisted that Allen Klein be hired to manage the Beatles; he was the one who was refusing to sign the agreement. At the end of a rather unpleasant hour, Eastman said contemptuously, "John, you don't know the trouble you've caused. It really is all your fault. That's why George hates you. He'll never forgive you. He never wants to speak to you. He'll never speak to you again."

"We'll see about that, Lee. I'm just tryin' to work it out," John replied.

"There's nothing to work out." Then Eastman tried again to convince John to sign the agreement, repeatedly returning to the point that George hated John and that the only shot John had at ever being George's friend again was by signing the document.

The tug-of-war continued for over half an hour. Then the phone rang, and Eastman answered it.

It was Julian calling John, and John asked me to speak to him. I took the call in another room. "I just saw George," Julian told me excitedly. "He has a message for Dad. He wants to tell him that all is forgiven and he still loves him and he wants him to come to his party tonight."

When I stepped back into the study, I announced, "Julian has a message from George to John."

"Yes?" asked John.

"George says all is forgiven and he still loves you. He wants you to come to his party tonight."

John beamed. So did I. Eastman, however, was dismayed. Five minutes later the meeting was over, and Neil took us to George's party at the Hippopotamus discotheque, and we all had a wonderful time. John finally signed the agreement in early January.

During the next few days, we took Julian to Montauk to see the stone house John was thinking of buying. "This will be

our house by next summer," John told him. "Next summer you'll be staying here with us." Then we left for Florida, where we celebrated Christmas early. When we returned to New York, we decided to give Julian a second Christmas and we shopped for gifts and a tree. John told me that he would put up the tree and wrap the presents, because he could see that I was exhausted. Gratefully I went to take a nap. When I woke up, John was asleep beside me. I got up, and Julian and I put up the tree, decorated it, and wrapped all the presents. At two in the morning John finally got up, only to discover that the job was done.

Then Yoko began to call John to tell him how much she had missed Julian and how much she wanted to see him, despite the fact that she had once made it clear to me that she found being with Julian very upsetting, because John had Julian, while she did not have Kyoko. Yoko kept insisting upon seeing Julian, and a time was set for her visit. As soon as Yoko entered the apartment, she threw her arms around Julian's neck and kissed him. "I've missed you so much," she said. Then she launched into a lengthy, loving conversation with him, asking him about his life and school. Butter couldn't have melted in her mouth.

She was also very cordial to me. John and I showed her our apartment. She was especially fascinated by the mirror over the fireplace. After she had looked around, she turned to me and said, "Not bad." Later she would mirror the ceiling above her bed. After an hour, she kissed Julian good-bye.

Then she started to call, urging John to bring Julian to the Dakota for a visit. John took him there after New Year's and before the boy returned to England. The short visit to the Dakota was the only time John had seen Yoko without my being there during the previous two months.

Julian left soon after the New Year, and John returned to the job of mastering *Rock 'n' Roll* and also started to write new songs.

I had a hunch he was eager to make a new album.

A few nights later we went out with Paul and Linda. During the evening Paul had a brainstorm. "Let's call David." We called David Bowie, and he invited us over to his suite at the

Pierre. John and I had seen him a couple of times before our Christmas holiday, and he had always insisted upon playing us the tracks of his new album, which he would title *Young Americans.* That night he played the album for Paul and Linda, even though John and I had heard it many times before. When it was over, he played it again. I could see Paul getting restless. "Can we hear a different album?" he asked. David ignored him, and when he began to play it a third time, John said, "It's great. Do you have any other albums that might be of interest?"

For a moment Bowie seemed startled by John's request, then he smiled and told me to pick another record. I selected an Aretha Franklin album and put it on the turntable. Then David said, "Excuse me for a second." He marched out of the room.

"I think you hurt Bowie's feelings," I told John.

"Paul's been askin' him all night to change the record," John replied.

"His feelings are hurt, John."

Linda suddenly piped up. "Oh, no. That's just the way he is."

As soon as we got home that night David called John. They talked quietly for a while, and when John got off the phone, he told me, "David really did feel hurt when I asked him to change the record. He was very upset. I kept tellin' him I didn't mean it that way." John was very distressed by David's reaction.

"When David looks at you, his eyes are always filled with admiration," I told him. "You've got to be especially careful when you're around people like that, because every little word and gesture means something special to them. Whether you like it or not, you've just got to be a little more thoughtful."

We continued to talk about how hard it was to be John Lennon, even in the company of other rock stars like David Bowie. I said to John, "Are you going to tell Paul?"

He grimaced. "Are you kiddin'?" he snapped. "It's not worth it. He wouldn't understand anyway."

Soon afterward David called to invite us to an overdubbing session of *Young Americans.* During the session John and

guitarist Carlos Alomar began to jam on a riff that had a really funky feel to it. It took David half an hour to set a lyric to the riff. The song was "Fame." Coauthored by John, "Fame" became David's first number one hit.

Disaster hit when John discovered that Morris Levy was planning to take the tape of *Rock 'n' Roll* that John had given him and market it as a TV mail-order record called *Roots*. "He can't do it. The tape sounds terrible. I don't want anyone to hear it. It's got stuff on it no one's supposed to hear."

But it was too late. Ads had already begun to appear on TV. John was furious. I thought his bad mood might drive him to drink, but it didn't. He decided to throw all his energies behind putting the finishing touches on *Rock 'n' Roll* and then promoting it as vigorously as he could. He wanted to fight Levy and he was determined to win. Eventually the two would wind up in court.

A day or two later the phone rang, and I answered it. "John, it's Yoko," I said as I brought him the phone. When John took it, his expression changed to anger. Before she had said a word he shouted, "Yoko, I don't have time to speak to you," and he slammed down the phone.

John turned to me. "That's it, I'm through."

The phone rang again. Yoko was enraged. "May, I never want you to do that again to me. He hung up on me. I don't understand what's going on. I don't understand what you're trying to do to me."

"I put you on the phone with John the way I always do."

"But he was angry. How could you put him on the phone if he was angry?"

"To tell you the truth, he didn't get angry until he picked up the phone."

Yoko paused. "Is he angry now?"

"No."

There was another pause. "May, don't do this again. This must never happen again."

"Yoko," I replied, ready to go further than ever with her, "there's nothing I can do about how he acts when he starts to speak to you. That's a problem between the two of you."

There was no answer. She had hung up on me.

When she called later, John refused to speak to her. Yoko tried that night, then several times the next day. Whenever she asked to speak to John, he signaled me, and I had to tell her that he would not come to the phone. She tried repeatedly for another day or two, then she stopped calling, and we did not hear from her for a week. When she finally called again, John decided to say hello.

He listened while Yoko talked to him. As he listened I could see his expression changing as he grew more interested in what she was telling him. "Did it really work? . . . How long did it take? . . . How do you feel?" he asked excitedly.

"She's stopped smokin'!" John exclaimed when he got off the phone. "She hasn't smoked in a week. She's going to try to set it up so that I can stop, too."

"How did she stop?"

"Yoko says she found a new way to stop smokin'. But she won't tell me what it is. She hasn't wanted a cigarette from the moment she stopped. Isn't that amazin', especially the way she chain-smokes."

"It sounds like Yoko."

"I'd love to try it." John really did want to stop smoking. He hated the fact that smoking two packs of Gauloises a day had shortened his breath and given him chronic cigarette cough. An hour later Yoko called, and a time was set for the meeting between John and the man who had gotten Yoko to stop smoking. I remember it was on a Monday. John was madly enthusiastic.

I sensed danger. "Everything is going so well. Please don't start these games again," I told him.

"Oh, Fung Yee, it's over, and Yoko knows it. All she's tryin' to do is help me."

"I want to come with you when you take the cure," I replied.

"No, no. Yoko doesn't want to see you, and I don't want to upset her. This is just between us." John threw me a look. He did not want to hear any more.

For the next few days Yoko called John repeatedly to tell him how effective the smoking cure had been. She kept telling

him she hadn't smoked a cigarette but she wouldn't describe the "cure" to him. Each time she called John grew even more excited and curious.

"She's playing with you," I said.

"You're bein' silly," John replied.

To be logical with John about that matter was to deprive him of his fun. I did not want to admit it, but I knew I had been trapped again. Nonetheless on Monday morning, the day that John was supposed to go to the Dakota, Yoko called.

"The stars aren't right," she told him. "I've canceled the meeting." She said that she would call back with a better time. That same day Yoko called with an appointment for Wednesday at seven in the evening. John was very pleased.

"John," I said, "can't you see you're being teased?"

He did not respond. What he did not want to see he ignored.

That evening we got a call from Paul. He and Linda were going to New Orleans to begin a new album, which turned out to be *Venus and Mars.* "We'd like you to meet us there," Paul told John.

"I'd really like to go," John said to me after the call. "I've never been to New Orleans, and it's Mardi Gras season, and I'd love to see it. And it will be fun to watch Paul record."

I was pretty sure that if I could get John to New Orleans, Paul would do the rest and get him into the studio to record with him. It was a very exciting prospect, but I said nothing about it, because I did not want to put John off. But he kept bringing up the trip, and each time he mentioned it he grew more enthusiastic. He seemed unaware of the possibility of recording with Paul again, but I think, deep down, that he also realized that he and Paul finally were ready to work together again.

A meeting was scheduled that night for Al Coury, Harold Seider, and us to discuss the promotion and marketing of *Rock 'n' Roll.*

"Fung Yee, listen to the tape with me," John said.

After John played the tapes, he looked at me and shrugged his shoulders.

"John, you wanted a classic Spector album. I don't have the best ear in the world, but I do know the classic Spector hits had extreme lows and highs. These tracks are all middle."

In the silence that followed, I realized he was listening seriously.

"You've got to pick the best of these tracks and be done with it. This album is a dream gone wrong. Years from now when people listen to it they'll know how upset you were before you got it together and made *Walls and Bridges.*"

John wasn't depressed by what I said. "Let me think," he said.

That night at the meeting John stated that he was taking "Angel Baby" and "Be My Baby" off the album. He had come to the same conclusion about *Rock 'n' Roll* that I had—that less of it was more.

"What do you think of me decision?" he asked me when we got home.

"If you believe they're the weakest tracks, then you should take them off the album."

John abruptly changed the subject, not wanting to think about the album anymore. "Do you know what I'd like to do this weekend? I'd like to drive out to Montauk and look at the house. Just the two of us. This time we'll be alone together. It will be winter. It will be beautiful, and I just really want to see it one more time."

It was a wonderful idea.

"Then we'll go to New Orleans next week, and then I'll come back and finish masterin' *Rock 'n' Roll,* and then we'll start the new one. What do you think?"

"I'm with you every step of the way."

"I'm up. I want to continue on . . . so after we go away, we'll come back and think about a new album."

I felt very happy. The John I loved most was the productive John, a man deeply committed to making good music.

We got undressed, watched television for a while, and then made love. We drifted off to sleep together.

In the morning, as soon as John woke up, he wrote on his pad. He spent a lot of the day writing the album he planned to make when we returned from New Orleans. Every so often he

stopped to play me what he had written to get my reactions. John was working on a sad song that he called "Tennessee." It had been inspired by his rereading of Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire.* I loved it and I told him so.

John seemed determined to write as much of the new album as he could, and by the end of the day he had another song, "Popcorn," a very funny, catchy tune. Yoko called two or three times that day to remind him of his appointment that evening to stop smoking, finally telling him that the method that had been used on her was "a new form of hypnosis." John was so busy writing, he got off the phone as quickly as he could.

Just as John was about to leave, Yoko called. The stars weren't right again, and the session was canceled. Yoko called back three or four times during the evening to schedule, then reschedule, the meeting. The session was then supposed to occur Thursday at four. On Thursday there were two reminder calls, followed by a cancellation an hour later. By then Yoko had spent two full weeks enticing John with the promise that he would stop smoking.

Each of those calls increased my anxiety. I tried to control myself, but I wanted the calls to stop and I couldn't hold it in any longer. "John, don't you realize what's going on? You could go to Smokenders; you could go to the meetings we see advertised in the newspapers; you could hire your own hypnotist. You don't have to go to Yoko's hypnotist."

"Yoko's really good at findin' people who can do these things."

"But everything is going so well."

"Fung Yee, nothing can happen now, because everything is goin' so well."

He was determined to go to Yoko's hypnotist. I became so upset, I began to cry.

Later Yoko set the new appointment for Friday at six.

At five fifteen on Friday John and I stared at the phone. I hoped that it would ring and that Yoko would cancel the meeting, but it didn't. "The fuckin' stars are finally right," John said. "It shouldn't take more than a few hours, and when I come home, who knows? I may not be a smokin' man anymore. Let's

go out and have a late dinner. Then we'll try to get up early and go to Montauk."

As John walked toward the door I suddenly called out, "John, John, please don't go. I've never asked you for anything, but I'm asking you for this. Don't go."

"Fung Yee, you're makin' too much of this."

That was John. He never listened to what he didn't want to hear. At the door I threw my arms around him and held him tightly.

"I'll see you later," he said.

I tried to put on a bold front, but when John left, I was shaking. I knew he was again going to get locked into the game he played with Yoko and I knew the game was too powerful for me.

I made a cup of tea and turned on the television. Five hours later John had not returned. I picked up the phone and called the Dakota.

"I can't talk to you right now," Yoko said abruptly as soon as she heard my voice. "I'll call you later."

"Is John there?"

"Yes."

She hung up.

I waited another hour. Then I called again. "I still can't talk," she said, slamming down the phone. I knew there was no way to get her to put John on the phone. I was miserable. I watched television until the last late movie, then I fell asleep.

When I got up in the morning, John had still not returned. I called the Dakota.

"I'd like to speak to John," I told Yoko.

"You can't. He's exhausted. The cure was very difficult."

"Are you sure he's all right?"

"He's fine. Fine. I'll have him call you later."

I sat by the phone all day, but John did not call. I also sat up for most of Saturday night, alone, once again staring at the television, doing my best not to think about what was going on at the Dakota. My stomach ached and I did not want to make myself sicker, so I just sat still, trying not to think at all. Whether I liked it or not I knew I would find out the truth

soon enough. On Sunday morning I got up and waited for the phone to ring. Again it didn't. I had never felt worse. I wanted some news—any news—and I knew I wouldn't get it. I could not imagine why John was treating me so cruelly, but he was. At two that afternoon I called Yoko.

"Yoko," I said as soon as she answered the phone, "I *must* talk to John."

"He's still sleeping."

"He's got to wake up sometime."

"When he does, I'll have him call you."

"Wake him up now. I want to talk to him."

"May, I'll have him call you."

I knew she was never going to put me through. There was nothing to do but wait.

Of all the silly, incongruous things, we had both made appointments with the dentist for the next day, Monday. I was going to keep mine and hoped that he would keep his. Unless he came back that night. Unless he called.

Everything had been going so well, yet I had not been able to stop John from going to the Dakota. I felt powerless and I felt awful. At that moment I hated both of them—hated them because they were so unpredictable. And I hated myself because I had allowed myself to be the victim of that unpredictability, because I loved John so much, because I knew our relationship was ending and I did not want it to end.

On Monday I got up, got dressed, and spent the morning waiting until it was time to go to the dentist. When I looked in the mirror, I hated the way I looked. I had hardly slept or eaten since Friday night and I looked even more haggard than on the night John had been tied up by Phil Spector, or on the night John had accused me of flirting with David Cassidy, or on the day that John had suddenly asked me to leave the house in Bel-Air, or on the night when he had attacked me in Palm Springs. I looked so exhausted and burned out, I decided to wear sunglasses.

John was not at the dentist's office when I arrived, but at the end of my appointment I found him sitting in the waiting room. He looked even worse than I did. His eyes were red rimmed and there were bags under them. He looked at me vaguely and seemed dazed. It was the look that followed an evening of drinking when he awoke and could remember nothing.

"Hi," I said.

"Hi."

There was a pause. John got up and went into the dentist's office, while I sat there, waiting. When he came out, I got up and began to walk to the door. John followed after me, saying nothing, and I walked out to the street.

"Where are you goin'?" John asked when we reached the street.

"Home. . . . Aren't you coming?"

John blinked. "Uh . . . right . . . okay."

He seemed extremely disoriented. I stared at him, trying to figure out whom he resembled just then. Suddenly it came to me. It was corny, but he seemed like one of those characters in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers.* He looked and sounded like a zombie.

We walked in silence the three blocks to the apartment. When we got upstairs, I opened our door, and John followed me in.

"I guess I should say this to you now," he said after he stepped inside. "Yoko has allowed me to come home."

I had suspected it. I knew it. But I was still stunned when I heard it.

"What?"

"Yoko has allowed me to come home."

I stared at him.

"I'm goin' to pack a few things and then I'm goin'."

I slumped into a chair. There was nothing I could say to John. He seemed automated, and I knew I couldn't break through. He got a suitcase and began to pack. "It wasn't anybody's fault. It just happened," he said as he threw his socks and underwear into the suitcase.

He looked up and blinked at me. "It wasn't intended to be," he said softly, and he continued to pack his clothes.

Tears streamed down my cheeks, but I was too stunned to say anything. I was too numb.

From the moment eighteen months before when Yoko had suggested that I go out with John, I had known that she had the upper hand. But as our relationship had progressed, I had allowed myself to think that John had changed. He had stopped drinking. He had had the time of his life with Julian. He had stopped being a recluse and had learned to have friends once again. *He was writing.* And yet, although I hated to admit it, deep down I believed that Yoko would always know how to get John to do what she wanted.

I should have realized that John would walk out on me at the moment of our greatest happiness. The truth of it was, the closer John and I got, the greater was my chance of losing him. It was Yoko's moment of triumph, and I felt humiliated and cheated. I don't know why I did it—to this day I don't know—but I got up, went to the telephone, and dialed her number.

"Congratulations, Yoko," I said icily when she answered the phone. "You've got John back, and I'm sure you'll be very happy."

Her response was a surprise. "Happy? I don't know if I'll ever be happy," she said bitterly. I had never heard her sound so miserable. Her response stunned me and her mood was so dark, it momentarily shocked me out of my numbness.

"Yoko, isn't this what you wanted?"

"May, this is not the time to talk. I'll call you." She hung up and never called back.

I walked back into the living room and watched John finish packing. When he was through, he looked up and smiled at me.

"Tell me about the cure," I asked.

"It was horrible."

"Why was the cure horrible?"

"I don't know. It was just like primal therapy."

"*Primal therapy?*" I gasped.

"I was throwin' up all the time. I kept throwin' me guts out. I kept fallin' asleep, and when I woke up, they would do it to me again."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing and I felt sick to my stomach. Things raced through my head. For a moment I felt I was in a science fiction movie and I thought I might even call my own hypnotist or primal therapist. Then I realized how silly that was. I knew that whatever the "hypnotist" had said or done had touched something very deep in John, something that was *always* there. John's childish fears once again had risen to the surface. I was furious with the infantile part of him. That was the hardest thing for me to face: that John wanted to be a child again—a child taken care of by a very strict mama.

"When did she tell you you could come home?"

"It just happened."

He looked nervously at me, confusion flickering across his face. "I don't know . . . it just happened. Nobody wanted it . . . it just came up."

He looked even more confused. Then he looked helplessly at me. "It just came up," he said again.

Even though I was enraged, I cared so much about John that his confusion made me even more upset. I hated the fact that John was leaving me, but I would have felt better if he at least had a clear reason for what he had chosen to do.

"What about us, John?"

"What do you mean?"

"What about the love we felt for each other? What about the closeness? When did that stop?"

"I still love you. I love you very much."

"John . . ." I began to sob out loud and couldn't say any more.

"Yoko knows I still love you. She's allowed me to continue to see you. She said she can be the wife, and you can continue to be the mistress."

There were so many thoughts I had when I was with John that I didn't have the courage to face. At that moment the thought I didn't want to deal with was that the three of us were probably crazy.

John suddenly jumped up and went to get his coat. "I almost forgot this. Yoko sent you a present." He took two little vials from his pocket and placed one in my hand. "One is for you, and one is for me." I stared at my bottle. John opened it. "I'm supposed to put some on you." He poured some of the liquid in it onto his fingers and then dabbed it on my neck. The smell was horrible.

"Smell mine," he said. He opened his vial. It had a sweet smell. I closed mine. I knew it was something horrible and I pushed the vial to the other side of the table.

John sat down beside me, took my hand, and caressed it. "It's goin' to be all right," he said. "You'll see."

John reached over and kissed me. "I've missed you, I've missed you so much. I love you so very much."

I was heartbroken and scared and I felt desperate. I clung to John tightly, never wanting to let go. John began to undress me.

We made love, and it seemed to me that nothing had changed. He had been telling me the truth. He still wanted me very much.

When we were finished, John lit a cigarette, and we just lay there quietly, caressing each other. Then John said, "I have to go home now." He got up, and I watched him as he dressed. "Don't worry," he said. "Don't worry about a thing. Everything is all right between us. You'll see. I'll call you tomorrow."

He left me lying there. I was stunned. Finally I got up and spent the rest of the day sitting by myself. I was too numb to move.

Occasionally the phone would ring. Calmly I told everyone who called that John had gone back to Yoko and gave the callers John's number at the Dakota. Everyone was very gentle with me. When my girl friends got the news, they were extremely sympathetic and they volunteered to stay with me if I needed them. No one wanted me to be alone, but I felt so crushed that I didn't want to face anyone—even my friends.

Mick called, and we chatted for a few minutes. Then I said, "Mick, I have something to tell you. John has gone back to Yoko."

There was a long pause. "I guess I've lost a friend," he replied.

That night I stayed by myself. It was almost as if I had entered a period of mourning. I watched television for a while and then I turned off the set and tried to sleep. As I lay there my panic began to grow. John had left me without a job, without a place to live, and with no money at all. Of course, John hadn't brought those subjects up. It was not like him to think about them, and I had been too shocked by his decision to bring them up either. I did not want to think about them then. I was too overwhelmed by my aloneness—I had not been alone for more than eighteen months—as well as the lunacy of what had happened and my fears about what the future would bring.

Hope dies hard, and in a certain part of me I did think John might come back. I thought Yoko might even send him back. But I also knew that each day he spent at the Dakota would make it easier for him to stay there even if he did still love me.

I was so upset, I couldn't stay in our bed. Even though it was freezing, I went outside on the terrace. I looked up at the sky and stared at the place where John and I had seen the UFO months before. I had never felt lonelier. I looked down at the street. I knew I wasn't the kind of person who would ever kill myself. I was too furious. I loved John. But how could I love someone who could treat me so badly? Had I merely been dazzled because the man was John Lennon? Had I confused the sexual passion we had for each other with love? I couldn't pretend that the end came out of the blue. I had always known John was capable of anything, but once it happened, I felt more awful than I ever could have imagined. Still, at the moment of my bleakest stress, I was not surprised. Deep inside, I had always believed that my relationship with John had essentially been initiated, controlled, and now terminated by Yoko. To love John was to accept the fact that anything could happen—anything.

Even though I felt sick I got back into our bed and tried to sleep. Lying there, one thought kept coming back to me: Despite the pain and horror of what I was going through then, given the chance, I would do the whole thing over again.

moments, and I could sense his tension as he asked me how I was and what was going on.

Then one day after I had been back about three weeks, John walked into my office in the Capitol building. "Let's go out," he said to me.

"What?"

"I've come to see you. Let's have a cup of coffee."

We went to the nearest coffee shop. After we had ordered, John said, "I don't think you can work there any longer."

"John, I've been expecting it. When do you want me to stop coming into the office?"

"Now. It's impossible for you to come and work here anymore. I'm very sorry about it."

"I'd rather get a new job anyway. . . ."

He looked at me blankly. "This is the best I can do, Fung Yee. I really want to help you, but you know I can't."

"John, I know you well enough to know that this is all you really can do."

We were both quiet for a few minutes. Then John said, "Yoko's havin' a child." He paused. "We haven't discussed it with too many other people."

I found myself with nothing to say.

"It's goin' to be a boy," he added.

"Another son! What are you going to name him?"

"I don't know. The only name that's come to me is Paris."

"Paris?"

"Yes." Then John suddenly asked, "Don't you wish it was your baby?"

I was shocked. "What do you mean by that?"

"You could have become pregnant to keep me."

"Do you really think that, or have you been told that?" John looked confused. "Yes, you're right," I replied. "But I was always careful not to. I never wanted to trick you or trap you. Do you really believe I wanted to trap you?"

"No . . . no, of course not, Fung Yee."

"Did someone tell you that I wanted to trap you?"

"No . . ."

"You shouldn't believe everything you hear."

John became very uncomfortable. Changing the subject, he asked, "What's new with you?"

"I've got a new boyfriend."

"Oh." He smiled. It was the smile that masked his real feelings. I knew that he did not like the fact that I had a boyfriend.

"Tell me about him."

"He's a bass player. I met him at Home. He's Irish."

"Irish?" John looked displeased.

"John, I don't want to be alone, and this man is nice to me."

"Richard Ross wants to go out with you."

"I don't want to go out with Richard."

"He's handsome and he's got a bit of money."

"John, don't try to fix me up. You're not as good at it as Yoko."

"What about Mick? He wants to go out with you also."

I wondered if John knew Mick had called.

"Mick really likes you."

"As far as I'm concerned, one superstar in a lifetime is more than enough for me."

After we had our coffee, we began to walk down Park Avenue.

"I heard about Pete Ham," John said. I had briefly dated Pete Ham in 1971, when he was a member of Badfinger, and we had remained friends over the years. Pete had fallen on hard times and he had become very depressed. A few weeks earlier he had been found hanged in his garage in London. "I really wanted to call you, but I didn't know what to say. I wanted to say I was sorry about what had happened. I wanted to say I was sorry about how I acted about him. God, I couldn't believe it."

John was always sorry when it was too late.

"People lost interest in Pete and they stopped caring about whether he lived or died," I told John. "I saw Pete when I was in England, and I saw how the indifference of others had worn him down and he had lost the will to survive. When people treat you that badly, there are just no excuses."

"There are no excuses."